

P 281315Z FEB 90  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6411  
INFO AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
AMEMBASSY SANAA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
FBIS LONDON UK  
FBIS RESTON VA  
CJTfME  
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ABU DHABI 01208

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA DAS GNEHM

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PREL ECON IR US

SUBJECT: HARDLINERS CONTINUE ATTACK ON RAFSANJANI ON  
ECONOMIC PLANS, INSIST HOSTILITY TO AMERICANS  
MUST CONTINUE

REF: (A) FBIS LONDON PM 2102110090 DTG 211100Z FEB 90  
- (B) FBIS LONDON RD 2302161790 DTG 231617Z FEB 90  
- (C) FBIS LONDON LD 2302164690 DTG 231646Z FEB 90  
- (D) FBIS LONDON LD 2202111190 DTG 221111Z FEB 90

11. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

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12. SUMMARY: MOHTASHEMI IS CONTINUING HIS DIRECT ATTACK ON RAFSANJANI THROUGH THE FIVE-YEAR ECONOMIC PLAN. HE STRESSES THE NEED TO RELY ON FAITH AND MARTYRDOM AND TO REJECT TECHNOLOGY AND DIPLOMACY AS WAYS OF DEALING WITH THE WEST. HE COUPLES THIS TO DEMANDS THAT "DEATH TO AMERICA" REMAIN A BASIC PRINCIPLE OF THE REVOLUTION. ARDABILI ADDS FURTHER ATTACKS, AND BOTH ARE REINVIGORATING THE CALLS FOR RUSHDIE'S DEATH AND LINKING ANY WATERING DOWN OF THIS POLICY WITH APPEASEMENT OF THE U.S. AND U.K. WITH RAFSANJANI HAVING TO DEFEND HIMSELF ON THE ECONOMY AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REVOLUTION IT IS UNLIKELY THAT HE WOULD FIND THE MOMENT PROPITIOUS TO FIGHT ON A SECOND FRONT AND TRY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. IN OUR VIEW, THIS IS THE CURRENT REALITY OF IRANIAN POLITICS. THE RECENT TEHRAN TIMES EDITORIAL (REF D) CALLING FOR RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES HAS NEITHER BEEN PICKED UP BY THE PERSIAN-LANGUAGE PRESS NOR ECHOED BY RAFSANJANI. WE DOUBT IT IS A SERIOUS INDICATOR OF POLICY CHANGE. END SUMMARY.

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13. IN AN EXTENSIVE INTERVIEW RUN IN KEYHAN HAVAI ON FEBRUARY 7 (REF A), MAJLIS MEMBER AND FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER MOHTASHEMI NEVER MENTIONS RAFSANJANI BY NAME BUT LAYS DOWN CHALLENGES TO HIS PROGRAM. MOHTASHEMI BEGINS BY DENYING THAT ANY REEVALUATION OF THE REVOLUTION IS NECESSARY; RATHER, IT IS BACKSLIDING FROM REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES WHICH HAS CAUSED IRAN'S WEAKNESS. HE SAYS THAT WHEN IRAN DEPENDED ON HEZBOLLAH AND MARTYRDOM IT SUCCEEDED; WHEN IT RELIED ON TECHNOLOGY AND DIPLOMACY, IT FAILED.

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14. WITHOUT MENTIONING THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN DIRECTLY, HE ATTACKS ITS BASIC DIRECTIONS, REPEATING CRITICISMS MADE DURING THE MAJLIS DEBATES. ONE OF HIS TARGETS IS THE PRIVATE SECTOR. "TODAY WE ARE AGAIN MOVING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION." PROFITS ARE BEING DIRECTED TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR. "AS A RESULT, THE PROFITS WILL ONCE AGAIN GO TO THE POCKETS OF A SPECIAL GROUP OF PEOPLE. THE MASSES CANNOT BENEFIT FROM THIS PROGRAM."

MOHTASHEMI WILL PROBABLY FIND SUPPORT FOR THIS ATTACK SINCE PROFITEERS ARE BENEFITING FROM RAFSANJANI'S FREE MARKET POLICIES.

15. ANOTHER TARGET IS THE PLAN'S EMPHASIS ON INDUSTRIALIZATION. MOHTASHEMI ARGUES THIS WILL ONLY MAKE IRAN DEPENDENT ON FOREIGNERS FOR PARTS AND MATERIALS. THIS IS A STRONG THEME IN A NATION WHICH BELIEVES OVERWHELMINGLY THAT THE HISTORY OF THE LAST 100 YEARS IS ONE OF SUFFERING FROM FOREIGN DOMINATION, FIRST BRITISH AND THEN AMERICAN. MOHTASHEMI CALLS FOR A BASIC REORIENTATION FROM FAVORING INDUSTRY TO FAVORING AGRICULTURE AND SAYS THIS WAS KHOMEINI'S COMMAND.

16. HE DEALS AT LENGTH WITH THE NEED FOR HOSTILITY TO AMERICA. "DEATH TO AMERICA" IS A PRINCIPLE OF THE IMAM. SLOGANS ARE BASIC TO THE REVOLUTION. IF THE SLOGAN OF DEATH TO AMERICAN IS REMOVED, THE PEOPLE WILL NOT RECOGNIZE THEIR ENEMY. ANIMOSITY AND HATE MUST FIND A PERMANENT PLACE IN PEOPLE'S HEARTS. WITHOUT QUALIFICATION HE REJECTS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

17. MOHTASHEMI CRITICIZES THE AUTHORITIES FOR WEAKNESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE DEATH DECREE ON SALMAN RUSHDIE, THROUGH LACK OF DIRECT ACTION AND INADEQUATE THEOLOGICAL DEFENSE OF THE DECREES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THE RUSHDIE THEME IS PICKED UP AGAIN IN A FEBRUARY 23 SERMON OF MUSAVI-ARDABILI (REF B), WHO ADDS, "THE ISSUE CONCERNS AMERICA; THE ISSUE CONCERNS ENGLAND. IT IS ABOUT ATTEMPTS TO DELIVER BLOWS AT THE REVOLUTION."

18. ARDABILI'S SERMON IS ALSO NOTEWORTHY FOR ITS COMPLETE ABSENCE OF MENTION OF RAFSANJANI AND KHAMENEI ON AN OCCASION WHEN PRAISE OF THE RULERS IS TRADITIONAL. ARDABILI DOES FIND ANOTHER WAY OF INDIRECTLY ATTACKING RAFSANJANI IN DISCUSSING THE THREAT TO IRAN IMPLICIT IN THE BREAKUP OF THE COMMUNIST EMPIRE. HE STATES THAT THE WEST IS HOPEFUL OF DEPOLARIZING THE WORLD, "THE WOLVES HAVE SHARPENED THEIR CLAWS, GLOBAL ECONOMIC CENTERS HAVE DRAWN UP CERTAIN PLANS." THIS CONTRASTS WITH RAFSANJANI'S FEBRUARY 20 PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET BILL (REF C), IN WHICH HE SAW DANGERS IN THE CHANGES IN EUROPE BUT ALSO A POSSIBILITY OF POSITIVE RESULTS FOR NATIONS "LIKE US WHO WISH TO BE INDEPENDENT." ARDABILI IS UNMOVED BY RAFSANJANI'S CAUTION AGAINST "ONE-SIDED JUDGMENT."

19. THESE PUBLIC DECLARATIONS BY SUPPORTERS OF THE MOST EXTREME POSITIONS OF THE LATE AYATOLLAH LAY DOWN AN EXTENSIVE CHALLENGE TO RAFSANJANI. THEY SUGGEST THAT PASSAGE BY THE MAJLIS OF THE ECONOMIC PLAN WILL NOT GIVE HIM AN EASIER ROAD THAN HE HAS HAD. THE BUREAUCRATIC DISORGANIZATION OF IRAN IS LIKELY TO PROVIDE AMPLE FAILURES IN THE PLAN'S AMBITIOUS GOALS. RAFSANJANI MUST EXPECT THAT EVERY SETBACK WILL BE UTILIZED BY HIS OPPOSITION TO PROCLAIM THAT THE "MASSES" ARE NOT BEING AIDED AND THAT IRAN IS SINKING DEEPER INTO FOREIGN DEPENDENCE. WITH SUCH A BATTLE ON HIS HANDS, IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT RAFSANJANI WILL SEE THIS AS A SENSIBLE TIME TO UNDERTAKE ANY WARMING TO THE UNITED STATES -- A SECOND, AND RELATED, AREA ON WHICH THE HARDLINERS HAVE STAKED OUT THEIR OPPOSITION AND WRAPPED THEMSELVES IN THE BANNER OF THE DEPARTED IMAM.

110. THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEHRAN TIMES EDITORIAL OF FEBRUARY 22 (REF D) CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES IN LEBANON DOES NOT STRIKE US AS A SIGNIFICANT BASIS FOR ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS. THE PAPER IS PRIMARILY A VEHICLE FOR SPEAKING TO THE WEST, NOT TO THE FORCES THAT MAKE POLICY IN IRAN. THE EDITORIAL, AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, HAS NEITHER BEEN PICKED UP BY THE PERSIAN PRESS NOR DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS. RAFSANJANI'S COMMENTS ON THE FOREIGN SITUATION BEFORE THE MAJLIS (REF C) LIKEWISE MAKE NO MENTION OF THE HOSTAGES. WHAT HE DOES DO IS TO REJECT EXPLICITLY COMPROMISE WITH THE WEST, ALTHOUGH HE NOTES THAT IRAN COULD IMPROVE ITS ECONOMIC CONDITION IF "WE WERE PREPARED TO COMPROMISE WITH THE ARROGANT POWERS OF THE WORLD."

¶11. IRANIANS ARE ADEPT AT GOING IN ONE DIRECTION WHILE KEEPING OTHERS OFF BALANCE BY THROWING OFF TANTALIZING HINTS OF DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES IN FORA WHICH HOLD NO ACCOUNTABILITY FOR IRANIAN POLICY MAKERS. WE BELIEVE THE TEHRAN TIMES EDITORIAL IS ANOTHER SUCH RED HERRING. THE PUBLIC CHALLENGES OF MOHTASHEMI AND ARDABILI REPRESENT THE REALITY WITH WHICH RAFSANJANI WILL HAVE TO COPE FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

WALKER